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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4516

INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/JCS WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RHEHNSC/NSCWASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 SARAEVO 002307

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DEPT FOR EUR (DICARLO), EU/SCE, P (BAME); NSC FOR BRAUN;  
OSD FOR FLORY

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TAGS: PGOV PREL PINR BK

SUBJECT: BOSNIA ON ELECTION EVE - EVOLUTION, REVOLUTION,  
AND CONFUSION

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\* Missing Section 001 \*  
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\* Missing Section 002 \*  
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SARAJEVO 09292307 003 OF 003

the House of Peoples, potentially cementing in place a nationalist blocking majority.

110. (SBU) Another wild card in Croat politics is Social Democratic Party (SDP) Zeljko Komsic's candidacy for the Croat member of the Tri-Presidency (Ref B). Anxiety is growing among Croat parties and voters that the SDP's traditionally loyal voters, coupled with multiple candidacies among the Croat parties themselves will propel Komsic to victory. The Sarajevo-based Komsic does not need to win all 110,000 to 140,000 projected SDP voters if Jovic and Ljubic split the approximately 150,000 to 180,000 Croat electorate among themselves. This week, Zvonko Jurisic, Croat Party of Rights (HSP) Tri-Presidency candidate, also reportedly began a late surge, presumably at the expense of Jovic and Ljubic. His gains, if real, would further split the Croat vote. Efforts to rally Croat parties around a single candidate have predictably failed amid clashes of competing egos.

Comment: What Does All This Mean

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111. (C) Our immediate post-election priority remains constitutional reform agenda. In that context, the most significant October 1 electoral races are those for the Bosniak and Croat members of the Tri-Presidency and the contest between HDZ and HDZ-1990 for the hearts and minds of Herzegovina. Silajdzic and Ljubic wins as well as a big night for HDZ-1990 would certainly complicate constitutional reform. Over the longer term, these results would also likely complicate the usual triangular negotiations required to reach consensus on other issues, such as police reform. In any case, mixed results in the Federation coupled with a clear Dodik win might herald a longer period of post-election coalition building, which could consume politicians for weeks

(Ref J). Losses by the traditional "big three" of Bosnian politics -- the SDA, HDZ, and SDS -- could/could also result in leadership changes that further preoccupy the parties and have a significant impact on the tone of Bosnian politics. Imagine, for example, an SDA led by a more overtly nationalist figure than the moderate Tihic. Our immediate post election challenge may be keeping issues on an otherwise crowded political agenda in order to ensure that we are ready to press ahead once the dust settles.

MCELHANEY